

## Message Text

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62

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INT-08 SCI-06 COME-00 IO-13 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7835

UNCLAS MEXICO 6677

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH/MX

SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE REPORT, SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS

REF: A. MEXICO A 6563, B 6640

1. REFTEL A WAS LAST EMBASSY REPORT ON EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE AND CASUALTIES. REFTEL B REPORTED ON VISIT OF CHARLES A. KNUDSON, NOAA, SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE, AND ADVISED OF UNAM SEMINAR ON AUGUST 28 EARTHQUAKE HELD SEPT. 5, WHICH KNUDSON ATTENDED.

2. ACCORDING TO HIM, SALIENT FEATURES OF SEMINAR WERE:

A. SPONSORED BY TWO UNAM INSTITUTES, RESPECTIVELY ENGINEERING AND GEOPHYSICS.

B. PROF. JAMES BRUN OF U/CAL, SAN DIEGO, WHICH HAS JOINT SEISMOLOGICAL PROJECT WITH UNAM (BAJA CALIFORNIA) APPARENTLY CAME SHORTLY AFTER AUG. 28 BRINGING SPECIAL EQUIPMENT WHICH WAS INSTALLED IN EARTHQUAKE ZONE TO REGISTER AFTERSHOCKS. GOM AUTHORITIES VERY HAPPY HAVE BRUN HERE. MOST COOPERATIVE.

C. QUAKE INTENSITY VARIED BETWEEN 7.0 AND 7.8 ON RICHTER SCALE AT EPICENTER.

D. ONLY 5 AFTERSHOCKS RECORDED DURING FIVE DAY PERIOD AFTER UNCLASSIFIED

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AUG. 28. OF THESE ONLY FOUR OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE AND NONE REGIS-

TERED AS HIGH AS 3.0 ON THE RICHTER SCALE OF MAGNITUDE.

E. FOCAL DEPTH OF EARTHQUAKE: ABOUT 100 KM.

F. THERE WERE NO OBSERVED INDICATIONS OF SURFACE FAILURES IN CRACKING, ATTRIBUTABLE TO FAULTING. THERE WAS SOME SLIPPAGE, NOTED PARTICULARLY ON ABUTMENTS TO BRIDGES, MANY OF WHICH COLLAPSED.

G. NEWER BUILDINGS, WITH ANTI-SEISMIC TECHNIQUES INCORPORATED IN STRUCTURE, CAME THROUGH PRACTICALLY UNSCATHED, WHEREAS OLDER BUILDINGS SUFFERED (GOM AUTHORITIES REPORTED EARLY IN WEEK OF SEPT. 3 THAT 229 COLONIAL BUILDINGS DAMAGED IN EARTHQUAKE ZONE. GOVERNMENT FACES MONUMENTAL PROBLEM OF RESTORATION, WITH ALTERNATIVE TO LEAVE THEM IN RUINS OR PARTIAL RUINS.)

H. DR. CINNA LOMNITZ, THE ABLE CHILEAN SEISMOLOGIST, WHO NOW IN CHARGE SEISMOLOGY WORK AT UNAM AFTER SEVERAL YEARS' STAY AT U/CAL, WAS ONE OF PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS AT SYMPOSIUM. QUESTIONED BY KNUDSON AS TO WHETHER THE EARTHQUAKE WAS VOLCANIC OR TACTONIC IN ORIGIN, HE PREFERRED NOT TO COMMENT UNTIL THEIR INVESTIGATION COMPLETED.

I. THE MAJOR FORCE OF THE EARTHQUAKE ITSELF WAS FELT SOUTH OF

THE LINE OF VOLCANOES (INCLUDING PEAK ORIZABA) WHICH CROSS MEXICO AT 19TH PARALLEL.  
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